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COMMERCIAL CARRIER JOURNAL

CCJ

FOR PROFESSIONAL FLEET MANAGERS

JUNE 1998

Spec'ing Decals:
Reflections on Safety

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Also:
Random drug testing upheld
Fleet Graphics Award winners

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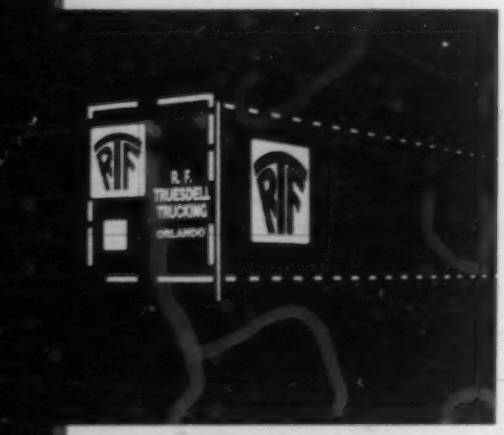
FEATURES



40 Spec'ing Decals: REFLECTIONS ON SAFETY
On dark highways, motorists often crash into the side or rear of stopped or slow-moving trucks that aren't seen in time to be avoided, says the National Safety Council's Motor Fleet Safety Manual. Proven to reduce such nighttime accidents, reflective tape may soon be required on new trailers.

45 SETBACK AXLES: PROS & CONS
Steer axles affect tire wear, ride, handling and weight capacity. Here's a thought-provoking collection of comments on set-back mounting.

48 FLEET GRAPHICS AWARDS
Good-looking trucks enhance the public's perception of the industry and establish a standard for all commercial vehicle operators to follow. The Commercial Fleet Graphics Awards were created to recognize individual and corporate commitments to excellence in the design and use of commercial vehicle markings.

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THE MOST WORRISOME JOB IN TRUCKING – The private fleet manager's job is the most worrisome in trucking. What makes it that way is the healthy prospect of becoming an ex-private fleet manager.

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TOUGH TACTICS MAY SAVE A TRUCKER – After longtime company managers purchased a profitable flatbed operation in a 1983 leveraged buyout, the company started having financial problems.

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EMERGENCY REVISIONS AND OTHER CVSA NEWS – Concerned that thousands of trucks might be placed out of service at roadside safety inspections for properly repaired tires, CVSA has revised some of the 1991 out-of-service criteria published in February.

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THE MOUSE THAT ROARED – Have you allowed your healthy skepticism of "mileage-enhancing" fuel additives to ripen into blanket cynicism?

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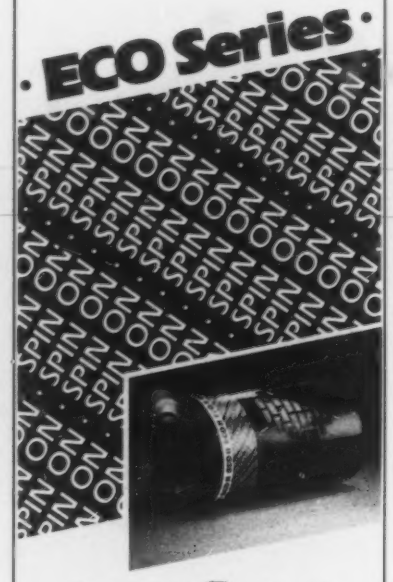
Is your air filter worth $6500?



That's what it can cost if a careless filter change dusts your engine.

With cartridge filters, you need to follow very detailed procedures. Overlooking just one can be an expensive mistake.

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE

To find out more about the financial health of your freight hauling competitors, check out next month's exclusive Top 100 issue. That's when CCJ will announce its 24th annual revenue ranking of America's largest for-hire trucking companies—from $20 million to more than $7 billion in annual revenues. In a companion section, CCJ ranks the Second 100, arguably the most dynamic, innovative group in the business. These are the up-and-comers, knocking on the door to big-time trucking. □

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor-In-Chief
GERALD STANDLEY
215-964-4513

Executive Editor
PARRY DESMOND
215-964-4529

Managing Editor
CAROLE SMITH
215-964-4524

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215-964-4517

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215-964-4514

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215-964-4509

Washington Bureau Chief
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202-662-8960

Washington News Bureau
PATRICIA STURDEVANT
202-662-8960

Western Editor
JAMES CHARLESWORTH
303-452-4739

Market Research Editor
MATT HOGAN
215-964-4521

Art Director
MIKE TRINSEY
215-964-4006

Publisher
GREGORY SHEREMET
215-964-4511

EDITORIAL OFFICES
Chilton Way
Radnor, Pa. 19089

570 National Press Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20045
202-662-8960

2600 Fisher Building
Detroit, Mich. 48202
313-875-2090

10982 Birch Drive
Denver, Colo. 80233
303-452-4739

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Shippers, transporters analyze intermodal services

Higher fuel prices and freight rates, and shortages of qualified drivers will have a stronger positive impact on the growth of intermodal transportation – movement of trailers or containers by rail, combined with local or regional delivery by truck – than new intermodal services or equipment.

That's one of the findings cited in the recently published *1990 Intermodal Index*, a market research report sponsored by the Intermodal Transportation Association and the National Industrial Transportation League. The survey was conducted by Temple, Barker & Sloane, of Lexington, Mass., and its subsidiary, Decision Research Corp.

The data-filled index is based on 30-minute telephone interviews in late 1990 with 459 randomly selected transportation managers and 125 plant/distribution center managers responsible for a minimum of 100 full truckloads or containerloads of finished goods annually. At least 10% of their traffic moves 500 miles or more.

The study also determined:

• 64% of the shippers use intermodal services to handle 15% of their full, long-distance TL shipments.

• Plant/distribution center managers believe they have a "significant influence" on mode and carrier selection. They also rate truck and intermodal services lower than corporate transportation managers do.

• Service issues – particularly improved service reliability – are major barriers to increased intermodal use. Equipment enhancements have the least potential to increase intermodal use.

• 38% of the shippers believe widespread availability of twin 48-ft trailers will benefit their company. However, 44% of the intermodal users and the large shippers (53% of those surveyed) are "more likely" to expect benefits from twin 48s.

Contact the Intermodal Transportation Association, 301-864-4163, or the National Industrial Transportation League, 703-524-5017, for a copy of the 32-page index. □

Ratings of Shipper Selection Criteria When Buying Trucking and Intermodal Service

Selection Criteria	% of shippers rating it 5 or 6 on a 6-pt scale of importance
Service reliability	93%
Quality of P&D	92%
Equipment availability	88%
Transit time	87%
Quality of customer service	85%
Overall ease of doing business	83%
Low likelihood of damage	82%
Price	81%
Equipment quality	80%
Payment of damage claims	75%
Shipment in transit status	73%
Equipment dimension/size	60%
Quality of salespeople	55%
EDI capabilites	42%

No 'magic bullet' solution to driver shortage

You won't find a clear-cut reason for high driver turnover in a survey recently done by Gene C. Griffin and Julene M. Rodriguez. Griffin is director and Rodriguez is a transportation economist for the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University, Fargo, N.D.

"No single factor causes turnover," claim Griffin and Rodriguez. That conclusion is based on analysis of 20-page questionnaires completed by nearly 4,000 company drivers employed by 13 truckload fleets.

Thus, say the researchers, driver-hiring and retention efforts "must be comprehensive and long-range. There is no magic bullet."

The research showed that most drivers want more training and have a "strong desire" to have an influence in many company functions. They want to be "equal with other employees."

The study also determined:

• Drivers crave contact with management because drivers on the road for a long time "may get a feeling of being isolated from the firm."

• Since many drivers don't "have a true picture of the job when they start," new drivers should get a "great deal of attention" in the first 6 to 12 months "to assist them in adjusting their expectations to reality."

• 81% said career advancement was important. In addition to more money, they claimed advancement includes a regular schedule, being home more often and a classification system based on performance. However, 56% thought opportunities for advancement was poor.

The researchers concluded that: "There is not a shortage of drivers; there is a lack of human resource strategy to take advantage of the available pool." □